

A Snapshot of the 2023 Opportunity Youth Forum



ABOUT THE OYF NETWORK

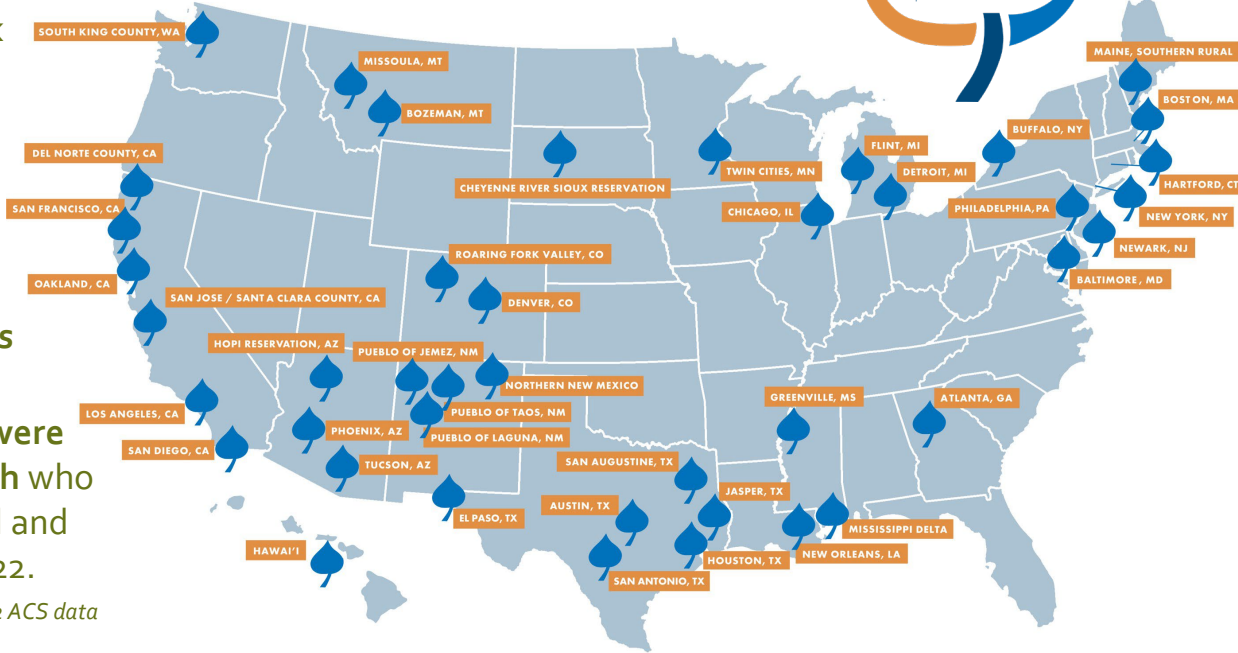
The OYF network is home to

8.1 million

16 to 24-year-olds

924,513 (11.4%) were opportunity youth who were not in school and not working in 2022.

Based on 2022 ACS data



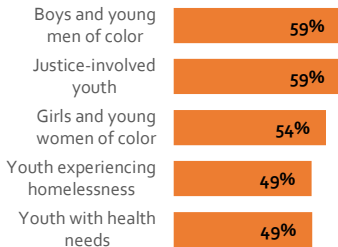
COLLABORATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Collaboratives vary in focus area, size, and experience, adapting to meet the unique needs of their communities.



AREAS OF FOCUS

Collaboratives prioritized the following young people:



SIZE

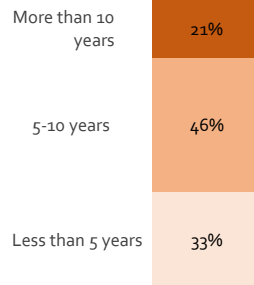
Network median: 17 partners
Range: 5-129 partners

78% of collaboratives included partners from at least three of the following sectors:

- higher-education
- community-based organizations
- government
- K-12 education



TIME FOCUSING ON OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

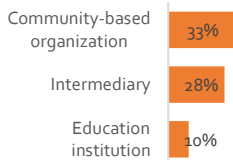


BACKBONE CHARACTERISTICS

Backbone organizations are a critical component of the OYF network, providing a structure and team to coordinate the work of each collaborative.



TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS



Other organizations include:

- Community foundation or funder
- Workforce investment board
- Local or tribal government agency



BUDGET

BACKBONE ORGANIZATION BUDGET

Network median: \$3.7M
Range: \$130k to \$125M

BUDGET DEDICATED TO OY

Network median: \$661,090
Range: \$30k to \$24.1M



STAFF

BACKBONE ORGANIZATION STAFFING

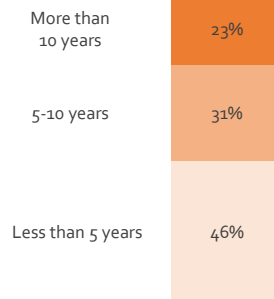
Network median: 11 FTEs
Range: 0 to 220 FTEs

STAFFING DEDICATED TO OY

Network median: 3 FTEs
Range: 0 to 25 FTEs

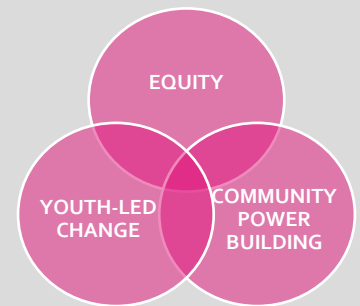


TIME FOCUSING ON OPPORTUNITY YOUTH



CORE VALUES

Equity, youth-led change, and community power building are foundational to OYF. In 2023, collaboratives reported greater evidence of aspects of youth-led change, compared to 2022, in: **integrating OY's recommendations** into program and pathway design, youth influencing decisions about **public policy** changes, and people outside the collaborative seeing **OY as leaders and decision makers**.



Over the past several years, OYF collaboratives have begun to explore how **belonging, meaning, wellbeing, and purpose** can help counter the impacts of structurally racist systems for youth. In 2023, at least half of all collaboratives:

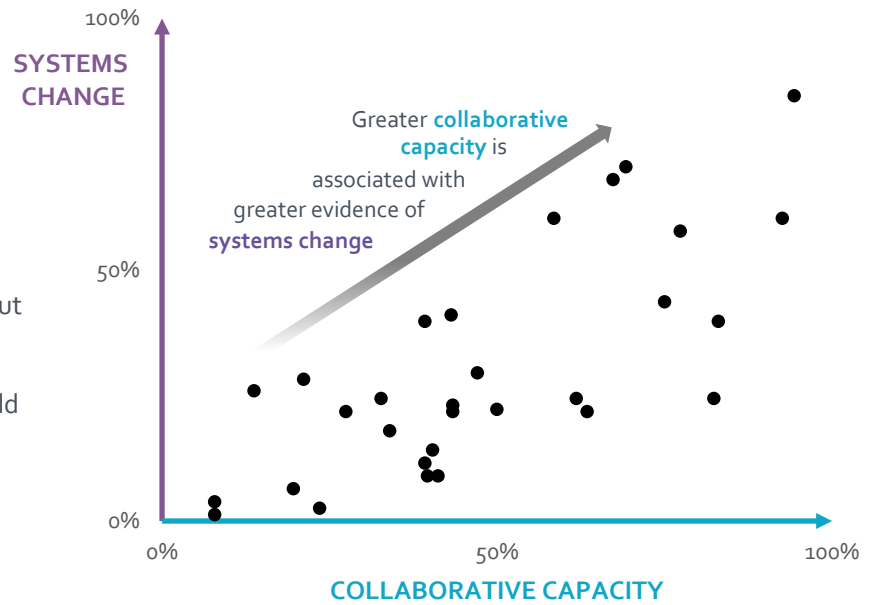
- Supported **programmatic improvements** to center belonging, meaning, wellbeing, and purpose
- Explained these concepts to **collaborative members**

ORGANIZING FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

The 2023 evaluation examined two dimensions of communities in the OYF network:

- 1) Collaborative capacity:** the infrastructure and processes necessary for the collaborative to carry out its opportunity youth agenda
- 2) Systems changes:** “shifts to the conditions that hold a problem in place”—in this case, disconnected pathways and inequitable conditions that prevent young people from achieving education and employment outcomes

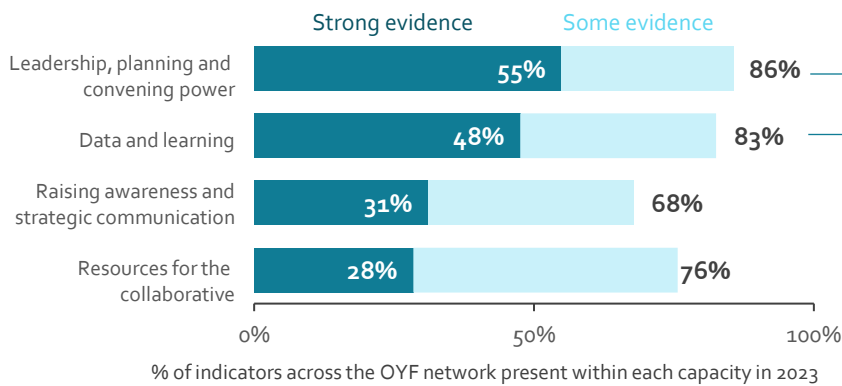
*FSG, *Water of Systems Change*: https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change



Values reflect the % of indicators reported as strong evidence by each collaborative. ● = collaborative

COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY

After a drop in 2020, network capacity rebounded in 2021 and 2022 and remained steady in 2023. Collaboratives' leadership, planning, and convening power is at its highest level in five years.



100% of collaboratives reported the presence of leaders from a variety of sectors who were actively involved in carrying out the collaborative's vision.

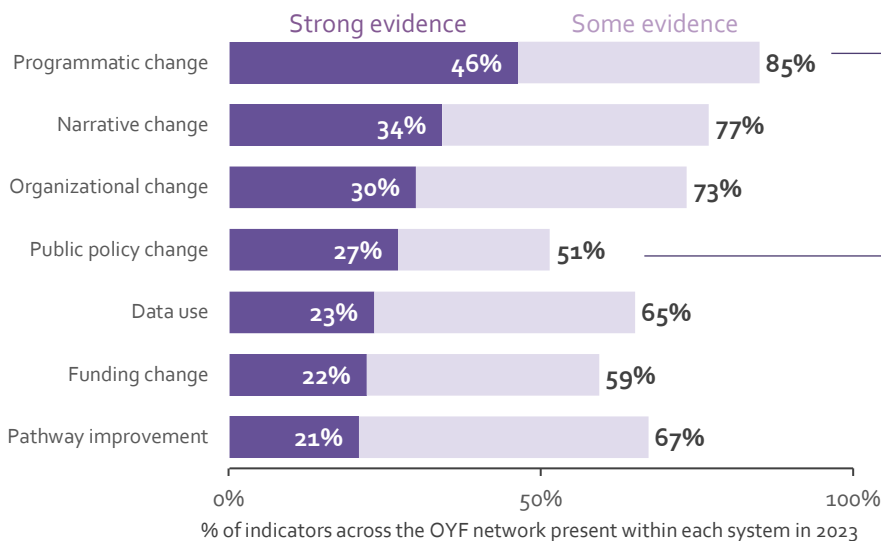
Data and learning capacity in the network is higher in 2023 compared to 2019 with collaboratives reporting that many of the indicators of data capacity and learning processes are at least somewhat in place:

- 94% regularly used data to inform its strategies and make decisions.
- 86% of collaboratives used an agreed upon set of measures to track annual progress and improvement.

SYSTEMS CHANGES

Network systems change scores were steady over the last five years (2019-2023).

Programmatic change has remained the most prominent type of change collaboratives report.



92% of collaboratives reported that existing programs, services, and/or opportunities were redesigned to better serve opportunity youth.

Public policy change is at its highest level in five years. Over half of collaboratives (53%) reported that new policies addressing OY needs and/or barriers were introduced in local councils.

Methods. Findings come from the 2023 OYF Self-Assessment. Thirty-six collaboratives responded to questions about their collaborative capacity and systems changes. The Assessment included indicators grouped into four types of capacities and seven types of systems changes, assessed on a four-point scale.

For more information about the Aspen Institute's OYF network: <https://www.aspencommunitysolutions.org/opportunity-youth-forum/>